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Sonke Mastrup, Executive Director
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www.fgc.ca.gov

May 27, 2015

TO ALL INTERESTED AND AFFECTED PARTIES:

This is to provide you with a copy of the notice of proposed regulatory action relative to Amending Sections 478, 479, and 702, Title 14, California Code of Regulations, relating to the implementation of the Bobcat Protection Act, which will be published in the California Regulatory Notice Register on May 29, 2015.

Please note the dates of the public hearings related to this matter and associated deadlines for receipt of written comments. Additional information and all associated documents may be found on the Fish and Game Commission website at www.fgc.ca.gov.

Dr. Eric Loft, Department of Fish and Wildlife, phone (916) 445-3555, has been designated to respond to questions on the substance of the proposed regulations.

Sincerely,

Caren Woodson
Associate Governmental Program Analyst

Attachment

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TITLE 14. Fish and Game Commission Notice of Proposed Changes in Regulations

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Fish and Game Commission (Commission), pursuant to the authority vested by Sections 200, 202, 203, 215, 220, 331, 332, 713, 1050, 1055.1, 1572, 3003.1, 4150, 4155, 4331, 4336, and 10502 of the Fish and Game Code and to implement, interpret or make specific Sections 200, 202, 203, 203.1, 207, 215, 219, 220, 331, 332, 713, 1050, 1055, 1055.1, 1570, 1571, 1572, 1573, 3950, 3960, 3951, 4150, 4155, 4302, 4330, 4331, 4332, 4333, 4336, 4340, 4341, 4652, 4653, 4654, 4655, 4657, 4750, 4751, 4752, 4753, 4754, 4755, 4902, 10500 and 10502 of said Code, proposes to amend Sections 478, 479, and 702 Title 14, California Code of Regulations, relating to implementation of the Bobcat Protection Act of 2013.

Informative Digest/Policy Statement Overview

Amend sections 478, 479, and 702, Title 14, California Code of Regulations.

The statutory mandate to promulgate regulations to place restrictions on bobcat trapping is set forth in Fish and Game Code Section 4155, the Bobcat Protection Act of 2013, which states in subsection (b)(1):

“Through the commission’s next regularly scheduled mammal hunting and trapping rulemaking process occurring after January 1, 2014, the commission shall amend its regulations to prohibit the trapping of bobcats adjacent to the boundaries of each national or state park and national monument or wildlife refuge in which bobcat trapping is prohibited.”

In addition, Fish and Game Code Section 4155(e) directs the Commission to set trapping license fees and associated fees at the levels necessary to fully recover all reasonable administrative and implementation costs of the department and the commission associated with the trapping of bobcats in the state, including, but not limited to, enforcement costs. A range of potential fees is presented with the recommended fee combination of \$35 per shipping tag and \$1,137 for the proposed Bobcat Trapping Validation. The proposed regulatory changes will not affect the take of bobcats with a hunting license and bobcat hunting tags under subsection 478.1, or under a depredation permit issued pursuant to Section 401.

PROPOSED REGULATORY CHANGES

Option 1: Partial closure of the state to bobcat trapping and establishing property-specific closure boundaries around protected areas.

- Amend Section 478, Bobcat, by adding descriptions of a statewide “Bobcat Trapping Closure Area” and 18 “Property-Specific Closure Areas” surrounding 23 protected areas and incorporate editorial changes and re-numbering of the text for clarity.

- Amend Section 702, Fees, by adding a new subsection (d)(1) to require (in addition to the trapping license fee set forth in the Fish and Game Code) the payment of a Bobcat Trapping Validation Fee set at \$[0 – 1,325] and subject to annual adjustment.
- Amend Section 479, Bobcat Pelts, by moving the current bobcat pelt shipping tag fee from subsection (c)(5); and Amend Section 702, Fees, adding a new subsection (d)(2), Shipping Tags, and increasing the fee from \$3 to \$[0 - 245] and subject to annual adjustments. Additionally, there are editorial changes and re-numbering of the text for clarity.
- Amend Section 479 by deleting the 'no cost' provision and 'department mark' on pelts not for sale in subsection (a)(1), each pelt will be required to have a Department issued shipping tag; and, by eliminating the listed Method of Take in subsection (c)(4).

Option 2: Total prohibition on bobcat trapping in California.

- Amend Section 478 by prohibiting bobcat trapping throughout California.
- Amend Section 479 eliminating pelt tags, fees, and department marks for bobcats taken by trapping.

BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION:

The benefits of the proposed regulations to the environment, whether of a partial trapping ban as described in Option 1, or a full ban as described in Option 2, will be through the improved protection of bobcat populations and the enhancement of non-consumptive use benefits. Non-consumptive uses anticipated to potentially increase include: the observation of bobcats in the wild and the perceived value of the bobcat population's contribution to ecosystem functioning.

EVALUATION OF INCOMPATIBILITY WITH EXISTING REGULATIONS:

Section 20, Article IV, of the State Constitution specifies that the Legislature may delegate to the Fish and Game Commission such powers relating to the protection and propagation of fish and game as the Legislature sees fit. The Legislature has delegated to the Commission the power to regulate the commercial trapping of bobcat. No other State agency has the authority to promulgate such regulations. The Commission has searched the CCR for any regulations regarding bobcat trapping and has found no such regulation; therefore the Commission has concluded that the proposed regulations are neither inconsistent nor incompatible with existing State regulations.

NOTICE IS GIVEN that any person interested may present statements, orally or in writing, relevant to this action at a hearing to be held at the Mountainside Conference

Center, at 1 Minaret Road, in Mammoth Lakes, California, on June 11, 2015, at 8:00 a.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard.

NOTICE IS ALSO GIVEN that any person interested may present statements, orally or in writing, relevant to this action at a hearing to be held at the River Lodge Conference Center, at 1800 Riverwalk Drive, in Fortuna, California, on August 5, 2015, at 8:00 a.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard. It is requested, but not required, that written comments be submitted on or before July 23, 2015, at the address given below, or by e-mail to FGC@fgc.ca.gov. Written comments mailed, or e-mailed to the Commission office, must be received before 12:00 noon on July 31, 2015. All comments must be received no later than August 5, 2015, at the hearing in Fortuna, California. If you would like copies of any modifications to this proposal, please include your name and mailing address.

The regulations as proposed in ~~strikeout~~-underline format, as well as an initial statement of reasons, including environmental considerations and all information upon which the proposal is based (rulemaking file), are on file and available for public review from the agency representative, Sonke Mastrup, Executive Director, Fish and Game Commission, 1416 Ninth Street, Box 944209, Sacramento, California 94244-2090, phone (916) 653-4899. Please direct requests for the above mentioned documents and inquiries concerning the regulatory process to Sonke Mastrup or Caren Woodson at the preceding address or phone number. **Dr. Eric Loft, Department of Fish and Wildlife, phone 916-445-3555, has been designated to respond to questions on the substance of the proposed regulations.** Copies of the Initial Statement of Reasons, including the regulatory language, may be obtained from the address above. Notice of the proposed action shall be posted on the Fish and Game Commission website at <http://www.fgc.ca.gov>.

Availability of Modified Text

If the regulations adopted by the Commission differ from but are sufficiently related to the action proposed, they will be available to the public for at least 15 days prior to the date of adoption. Any person interested may obtain a copy of said regulations prior to the date of adoption by contacting the agency representative named herein.

If the regulatory proposal is adopted, the final statement of reasons may be obtained from the address above when it has been received from the agency program staff.

Impact of Regulatory Action/Results of the Economic Impact Analysis

The potential for significant statewide adverse economic impacts that might result from the proposed regulatory action has been assessed, and the following initial determinations relative to the required statutory categories have been made:

(a) Significant Statewide Adverse Economic Impact Directly Affecting Business, Including the Ability of California Businesses to Compete with Businesses in Other States:

The Commission does not anticipate significant statewide adverse economic impact directly affecting business, although the proposed fee increases may reduce the ability of California bobcat trapping businesses to compete with businesses in other states.

The principle businesses that are expected to be impacted by the proposed regulatory changes are approximately 200 licensed trappers which Department records indicate have historically taken bobcat and paid the current shipping tag fee. Their income is not derived solely from the take of bobcat pelts during the relatively short bobcat trapping season, but also from other animals lawfully taken for profit. Whether the increase in fees or the reduction in opportunity from limitations on trapping areas, as described in Option 1, or a complete ban as described in Option 2, the economic loss to the state as a whole is expected to be very small and would not significantly affect California businesses or their ability to compete with businesses in other states.

(b) Impact on the Creation or Elimination of Jobs Within the State, the Creation of New Businesses or the Elimination of Existing Businesses, or the Expansion of Businesses in California; Benefits of the Regulation to the Health and Welfare of California Residents, Worker Safety, and the State's Environment:

The Commission does not anticipate any significant impacts on the creation or elimination of jobs within the State because a partial or full ban would affect only a small number of licensed commercial trappers whose income is not derived solely from bobcat pelts but also from other animals lawfully taken for profit.

The Commission anticipates potential benefits to the health and welfare of California residents through the enhancement of non-consumptive use benefits. Non-consumptive uses that could increase include: the observation of bobcats in the wild and the perceived value of the bobcat population's contribution to ecosystem functioning.

The Commission does not anticipate benefits to worker safety because this regulatory action will not impact health, welfare or worker safety.

The Commission anticipates possible benefits to bobcat populations because the regulations required by statute will place further limitations on the take of bobcats.

(c) Cost Impacts on a Representative Private Person or Business:

If Option 1 is adopted, the Commission anticipates increased costs to the business of commercial trappers because of the additional fees for the Bobcat Trapping Validation and increased fees for shipping tags on pelts. The Commission expects these fees to be entirely absorbable by passing on this cost to the consumers of bobcat pelts. Private persons, not involved in commerce in bobcat products will not be impacted by any cost.

A statewide ban (Option 2) would impact a small number of licensed trappers who will no longer derive any income from the sale of bobcat pelts. However, licensed trappers could continue to derive income from the legal take of other animals.

- (d) Costs or Savings to State Agencies or Costs/Savings in Federal Funding to the State: None.
- (e) Nondiscretionary Costs/Savings to Local Agencies: None.
- (f) Programs Mandated on Local Agencies or School Districts: None.
- (g) Costs Imposed on any Local Agency or School District that is Required to be Reimbursed Under Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4, Government Code: None.
- (h) Effect on Housing Costs: None.

Effect on Small Business

It has been determined that the adoption of these regulations may affect small business. The Commission has drafted the regulations in Plain English pursuant to Government Code Sections 11342.580 and 11346.2(a)(1).

Consideration of Alternatives

The Commission must determine that no reasonable alternative considered by the Commission, or that has otherwise been identified and brought to the attention of the Commission, would be more effective in carrying out the purpose for which the action is proposed, would be as effective and less burdensome to affected private persons than the proposed action, or would be more cost effective to affected private persons and equally effective in implementing the statutory policy or other provision of law.

FISH AND GAME COMMISSION

Sonke Mastrup
Executive Director

Dated: